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STARBLAST
THE LONG-AWAITED CONCLUSION TO THE BIGGEST COSMIC FREE-FOR-ALL OF THE YEAR!
FEEL THE FURY OF THE VILLAINOUS SKELETRON
DIRECT EDITION
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STAN LEE PRESENTS
STARBLAST
THERE IS SPACE BEYOND THE BOUNDARIES OF OUR UNIVERSE; EARTHS BEYOND OUR EARTH.
IN A UNIVERSE SO DISTANT FROM THE ONE WE KNOW THAT NO WATCHER HAS EVER OBSERVED IT, THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE VERY COSMOS IS DIFFERENT.
WHAT THIS UNIVERSE HAS IS THE STARBRAND; AND ALL PARANORMAL POWERS ON EARTH DERIVE FROM IT.
NOW, POWERFUL ALIENS FROM ANOTHER UNIVERSE HAVE LEARNED OF THE STARBRAND AND HAVE TRAVELED TO THE WORLD THEY BELIEVE TO BE ITS SOURCE.
THE END OF THE WORLD
(AS WE KNOW IT)
TODAY, REALITY WILL BE ROCKED.
OH... MY... GOD--THEY'VE COME!

MARK GRUENWALD
WRITER

KONG, PALANT, BUCKLER JR.
PENCILERS

DON HUDSON & ERNIE CHAN
INKERS

MICHAEL HIGGINS
ASST. EDITOR

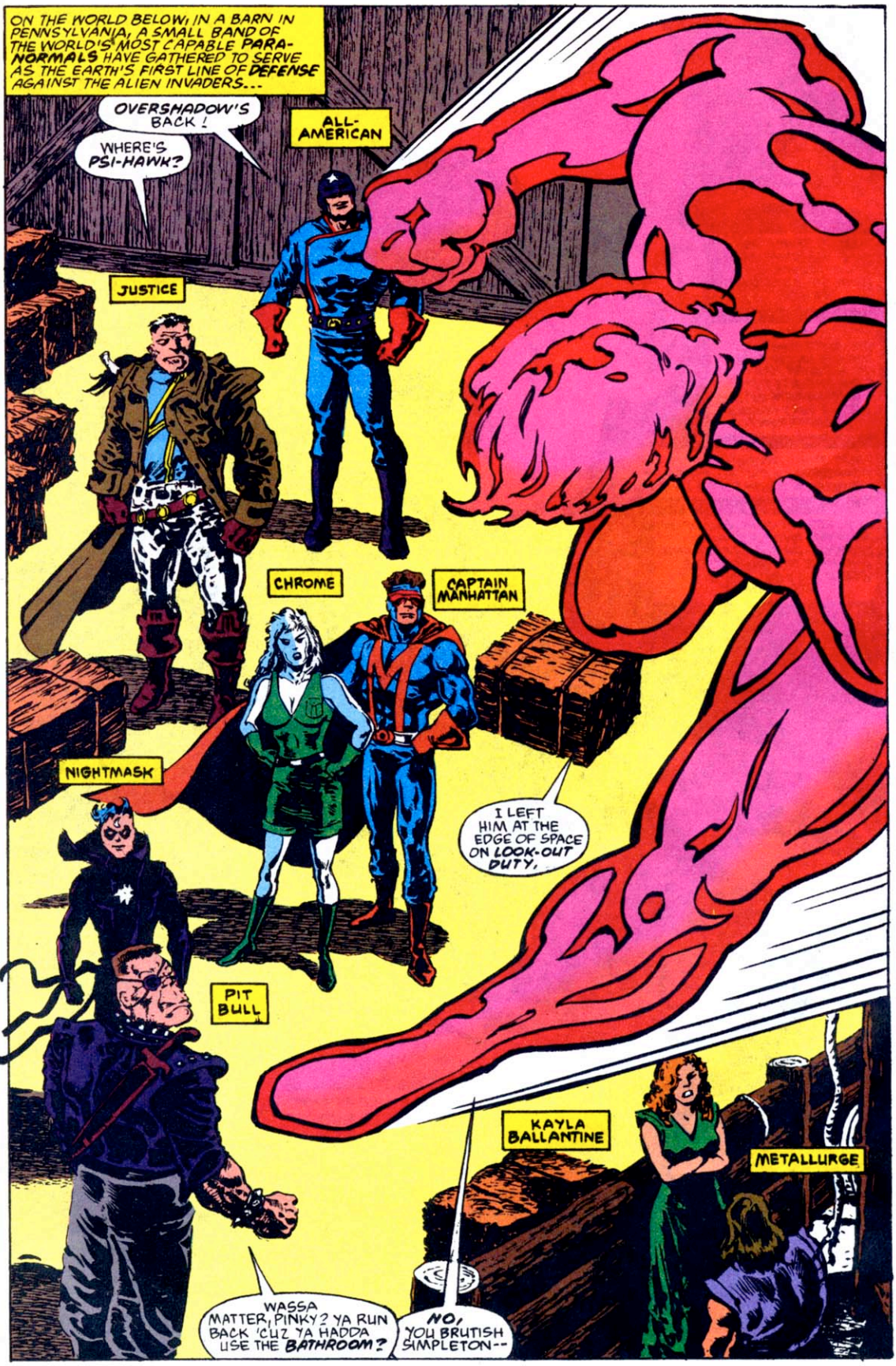
PAUL BECTON
COLORIST

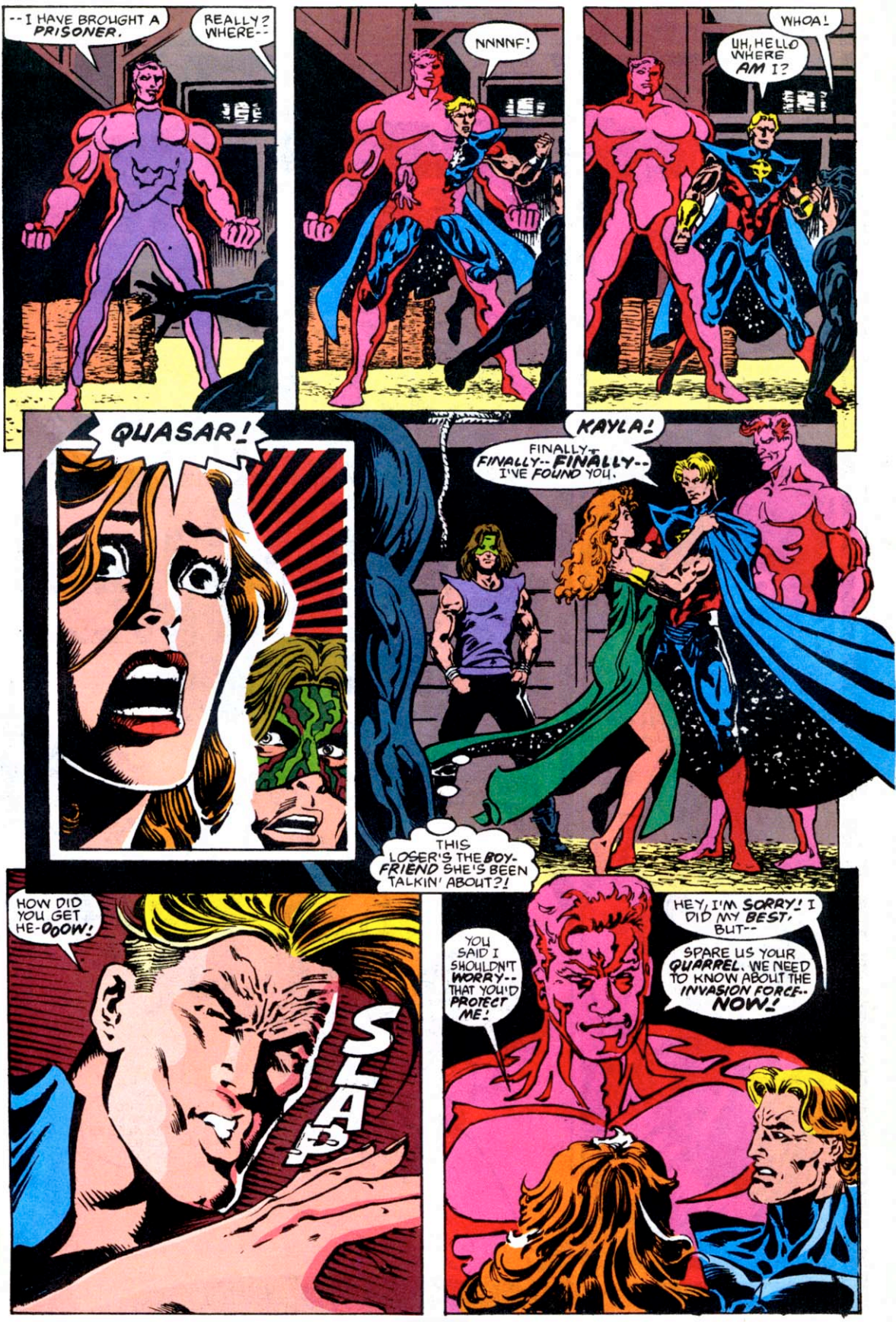
MIKE ROCKWITZ
EDITOR

RALPH MACCHIO
GROUP EDITOR

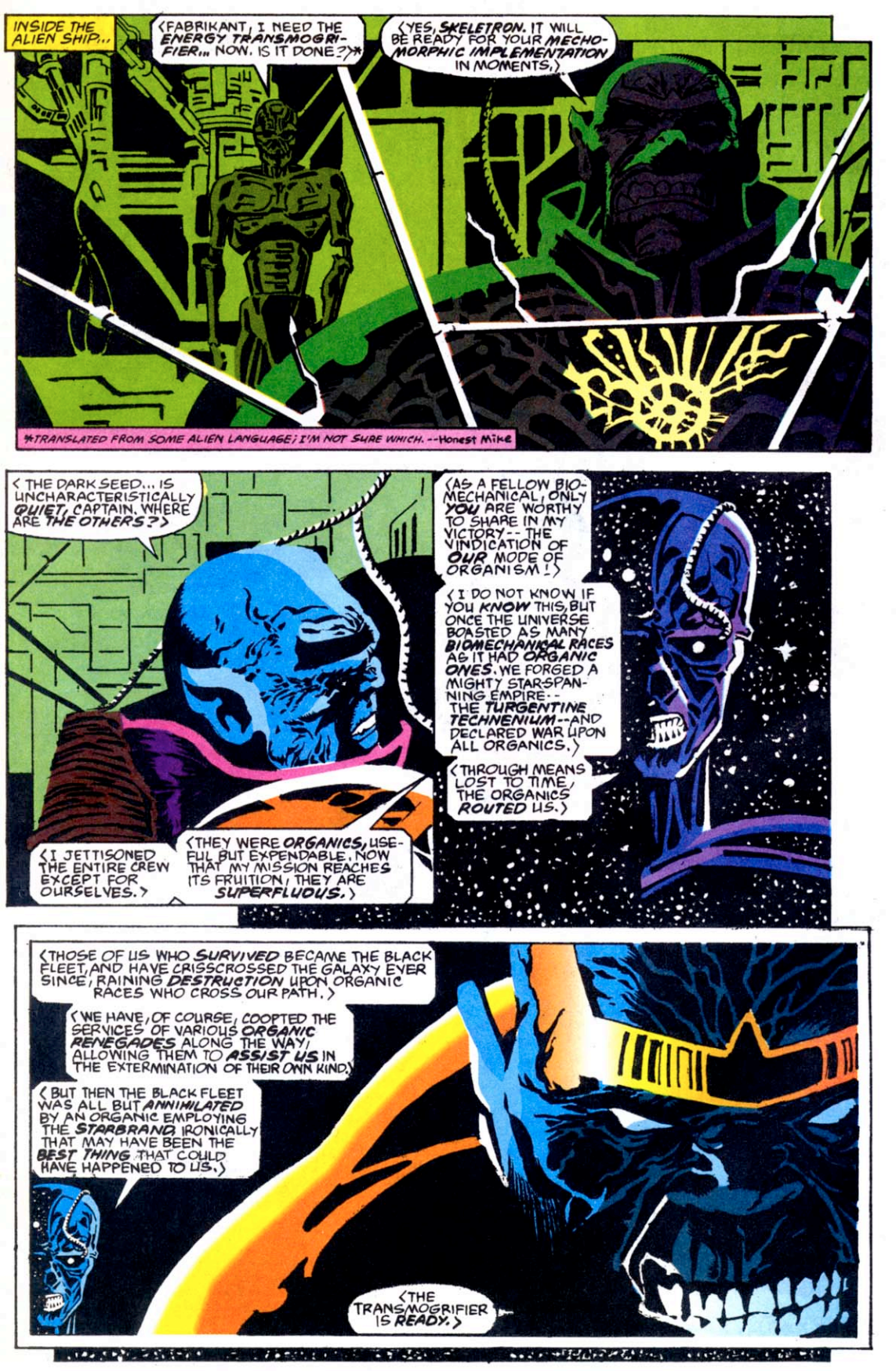
TOM DEFALCO
CHIEF

STARBLAST™ Vol. 1, No. 4, April, 1994. Published by MARVEL COMICS, Terry Stewart, President. Stan Lee, Publisher. Michael Hobson, Group Vice President, Publishing. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, NY 10016. Copyright © 1994 Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc. All rights reserved. Price $1.75 per copy in the U.S. and $2.25 in Canada. GST #R127032852. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. This periodical may not be sold except by authorized dealers and is sold subject to the condition that it shall not be sold or distributed with any part of its cover or markings removed, nor in a mutilated condition. STARBLAST (including all prominent characters featured in the issue and the distinctive likenesses thereof) is a trademark of MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP, INC. Printed in U.S.A.


ON THE WORLD BELOW, IN A BARN IN PENNSYLVANIA, A SMALL BAND OF THE WORLD'S MOST CAPABLE PARA-NORMALS HAVE GATHERED TO SERVE AS THE EARTH'S FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE AGAINST THE ALIEN INVADERS...
OVERSHADOW'S BACK!
WHERE'S PSI-HAWK?
ALL-AMERICAN
JUSTICE
CHROME
CAPTAIN MANHATTAN
NIGHTMASK
I LEFT HIM AT THE EDGE OF SPACE ON LOOK-OUT DUTY.
PIT BULL
KAYLA BALLANTINE
METALLURGE
WASSA MATTER, PINKY? YA RUN BACK 'CUZ YA HADDA USE THE BATHROOM?
NO, YOU BRUTISH SIMPLETON--


--I HAVE BROUGHT A PRISONER.
REALLY? WHERE--
NNNNF!
WHOA!
UH, HELLO WHERE AM I?
QUASAR!
KAYLA!
FINALLY-- FINALLY-- FINALLY-- I'VE FOUND YOU.
THIS LOSER'S THE BOY-FRIEND SHE'S BEEN TALKIN' ABOUT?!
HOW DID YOU GET HE-OOOW!
SLAP
YOU SAID I SHOULDN'T WORRY-- THAT YOU'D PROTECT ME!
HEY, I'M SORRY! I DID MY BEST, BUT--
SPARE US YOUR QUARREL. WE NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE INVASION FORCE-- NOW!

BUT JUST THEN--
OVERSHADOW! NIGHTMASK! THEY'RE HERE! AN ALIEN SHIP! GET UP HERE IF YOU CAN--QUICK!
I'LL BE THERE, PSI-HAWK!
HELLO, QUASAR. REMEMBER ME?* NEVER EXPECTED TO SEE YOU AGAIN. THIS INVASION... WOULDN'T HAPPEN TO BE YOUR FAULT, WOULD IT?
UH, NO... NOT REALLY. LOOK, YOU GUYS, IF YOU WANT TO DEFEND YOUR PLANET, I CAN TAKE YOU THERE FAST!
* THEY MET IN QUASAR #32. --ROCK SOLID
UH, KAY... WE'LL DISCUSS WHAT A BIG JERK I AM AFTER WE NAIL YOUR KIDNAPPERS, OKAY?
OKAY. BE CAREFUL.
AND AFTER HEATED DISCUSSION ABOUT QUASAR'S TRUSTWORTHINESS...
OKAY, PEOPLE, HERE'S WHAT I KNOW ABOUT THE ALIENS WE'RE GOING TO ENCOUNTER...


INSIDE THE ALIEN SHIP...
〈FABRIKANT, I NEED THE ENERGY TRANSMOGRIFIER... NOW. IS IT DONE?〉*
〈YES, SKELETRON. IT WILL BE READY FOR YOUR MECHO-MORPHIC IMPLEMENTATION IN MOMENTS.〉
*TRANSLATED FROM SOME ALIEN LANGUAGE; I'M NOT SURE WHICH. --Honest Mike
〈THE DARK SEED... IS UNCHARACTERISTICALLY QUIET, CAPTAIN. WHERE ARE THE OTHERS?〉
〈I JETTISONED THE ENTIRE CREW EXCEPT FOR OURSELVES.〉
〈THEY WERE ORGANICS, USEFUL BUT EXPENDABLE. NOW THAT MY MISSION REACHES ITS FRUITION, THEY ARE SUPERFLUOUS.〉
〈AS A FELLOW BIO-MECHANICAL, ONLY YOU ARE WORTHY TO SHARE IN MY VICTORY -- THE VINDICATION OF OUR MODE OF ORGANISM!〉
〈I DO NOT KNOW IF YOU KNOW THIS, BUT ONCE THE UNIVERSE BOASTED AS MANY BIOMECHANICAL RACES AS IT HAD ORGANIC ONES. WE FORGED A MIGHTY STAR-SPANNING EMPIRE -- THE TURGENTINE TECHNENIUM -- AND DECLARED WAR UPON ALL ORGANICS.〉
〈THROUGH MEANS LOST TO TIME, THE ORGANICS ROUTED US.〉
〈THOSE OF US WHO SURVIVED BECAME THE BLACK FLEET, AND HAVE CRISSCROSSED THE GALAXY EVER SINCE, RAINING DESTRUCTION UPON ORGANIC RACES WHO CROSS OUR PATH.〉
〈WE HAVE, OF COURSE, COOPTED THE SERVICES OF VARIOUS ORGANIC RENEGADES ALONG THE WAY, ALLOWING THEM TO ASSIST US IN THE EXTERMINATION OF THEIR OWN KIND.〉
〈BUT THEN THE BLACK FLEET WAS ALL BUT ANNIHILATED BY AN ORGANIC EMPLOYING THE STARBRAND, IRONICALLY THAT MAY HAVE BEEN THE BEST THING THAT COULD HAVE HAPPENED TO US.〉
〈THE TRANSMOGRIFIER IS READY.〉

MEANWHILE, ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE GALAXY, A **WORLD** FROM ANOTHER UNIVERSE HAS PARTIALLY THRUST ITSELF INTO THE UNIVERSE OF THE **STARBRAND.**

THE WORLD IS THE **LABORATORY-PLANET** WHICH FOR MILLENNIA NOW HAS SERVED AS HOME BASE FOR THE ENIGMATIC EXPERIMENTER KNOWN ONLY AS THE **STRANGER.**

WHEN THE STRANGER REMOVED THE **STARBRAND** FROM THE EARTH WOMAN, KAYLA BALLANTINE, AND TRANS-FERRED IT TO **HIMSELF,** THE ALIEN POWER VIOLENTLY REACTED TO HIS OWN CONSIDERABLE PERSONAL ENERGIES --

--AND CAUSED THE INTERDIMENSIONAL **PLANETARY INTRU-SION.** APPROXI-MATELY **HALF** OF THE STRANGER'S WORLD IS NOW IN THE NEW UNIVERSE, BUT **MORE** OF IT IS SLIPPING IN BY THE **MINUTE.**

UNAWARE OF THE PLANET'S PREDICAMENT, A HANDFUL OF **EARTH HEROES** HAVE A MORE PRESSING CONCERN... FOR THEY ARE IN THE PART OF SKELETRON'S **SHIP** THAT HE **JETTISONED...**

...AND IT IS MOMENTS AWAY FROM **IMPACTING** WITH THE PLANET'S SURFACE--

--UNLESS THE SILENT INHUMAN KNOWN AS **BLACK BOLT** CAN STOP ITS PERILOUS PLUMMET!

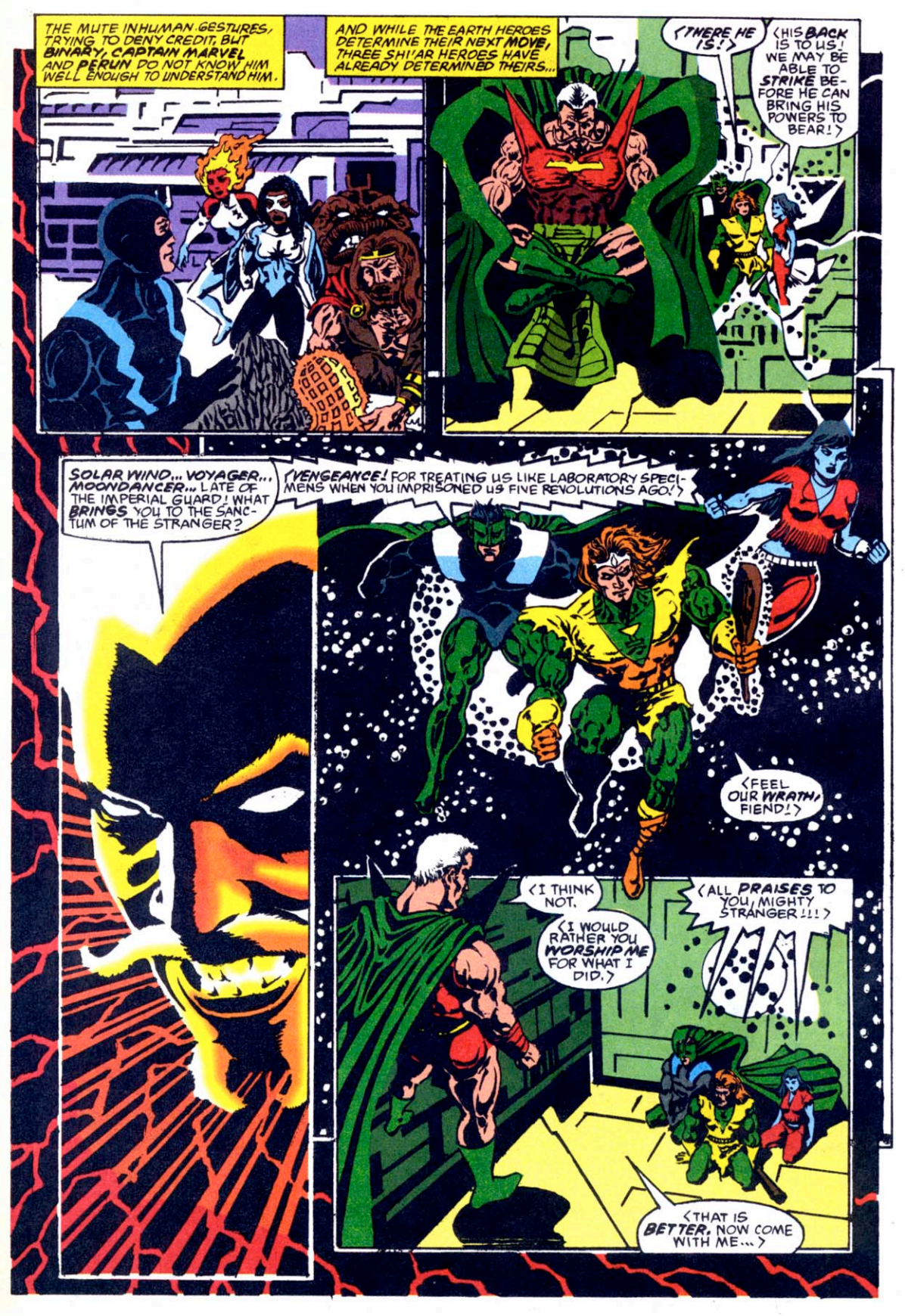
THE **ANTENNA** ON HIS BROW ERUPTS--

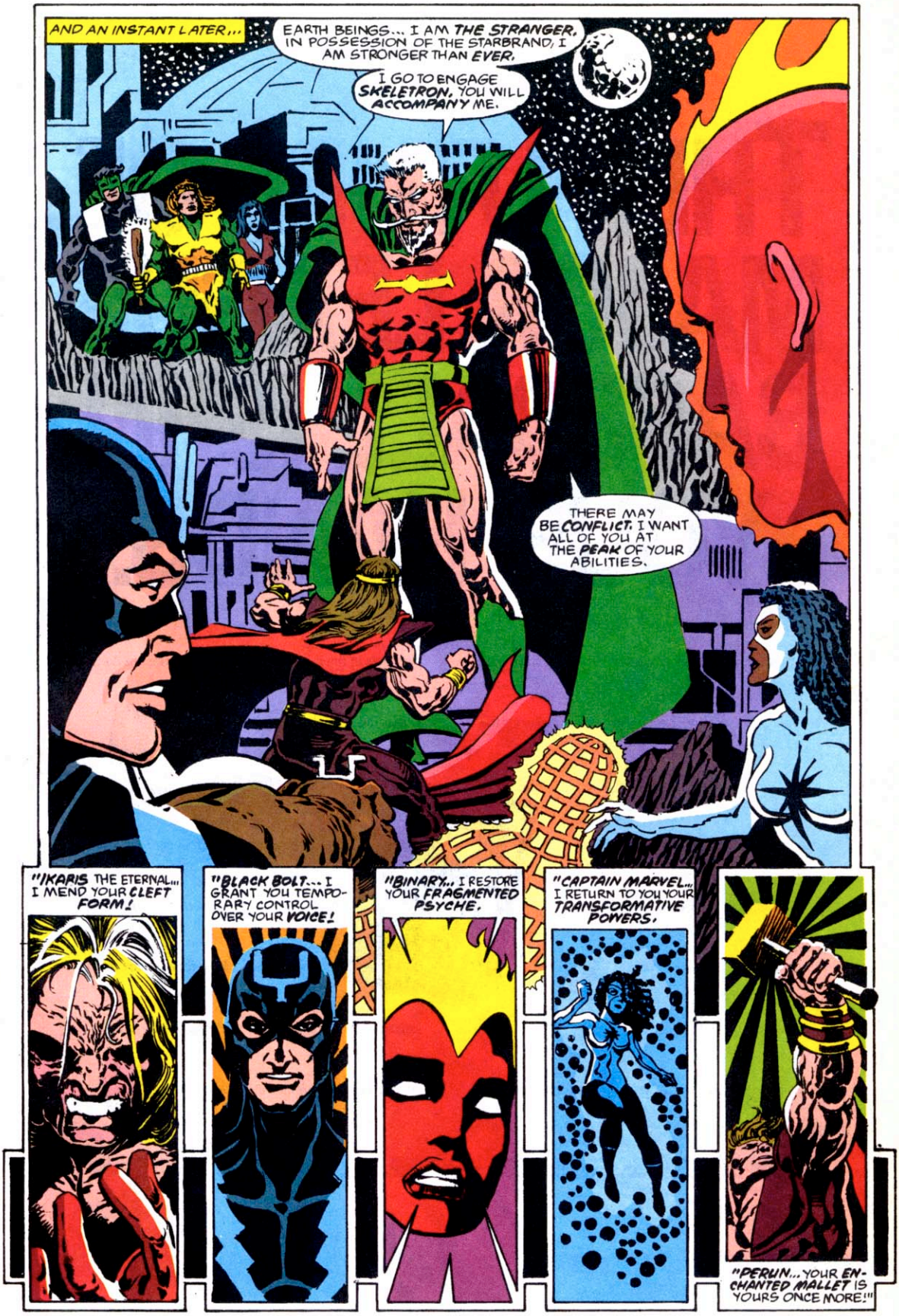
--AND HE WEAVES A NET OF HIGHLY ENERGIZED **ELECTRONS**--

--WHICH MANAGES TO SLOW THE FALLING CRAFT ONLY **SLIGHTLY...!**

TO HIS ASTONISHMENT, DESPITE HIS FAILURE, THE CRAFT SUDDENLY **DECELERATES** AND **ALIGHTS GENTLY...!**

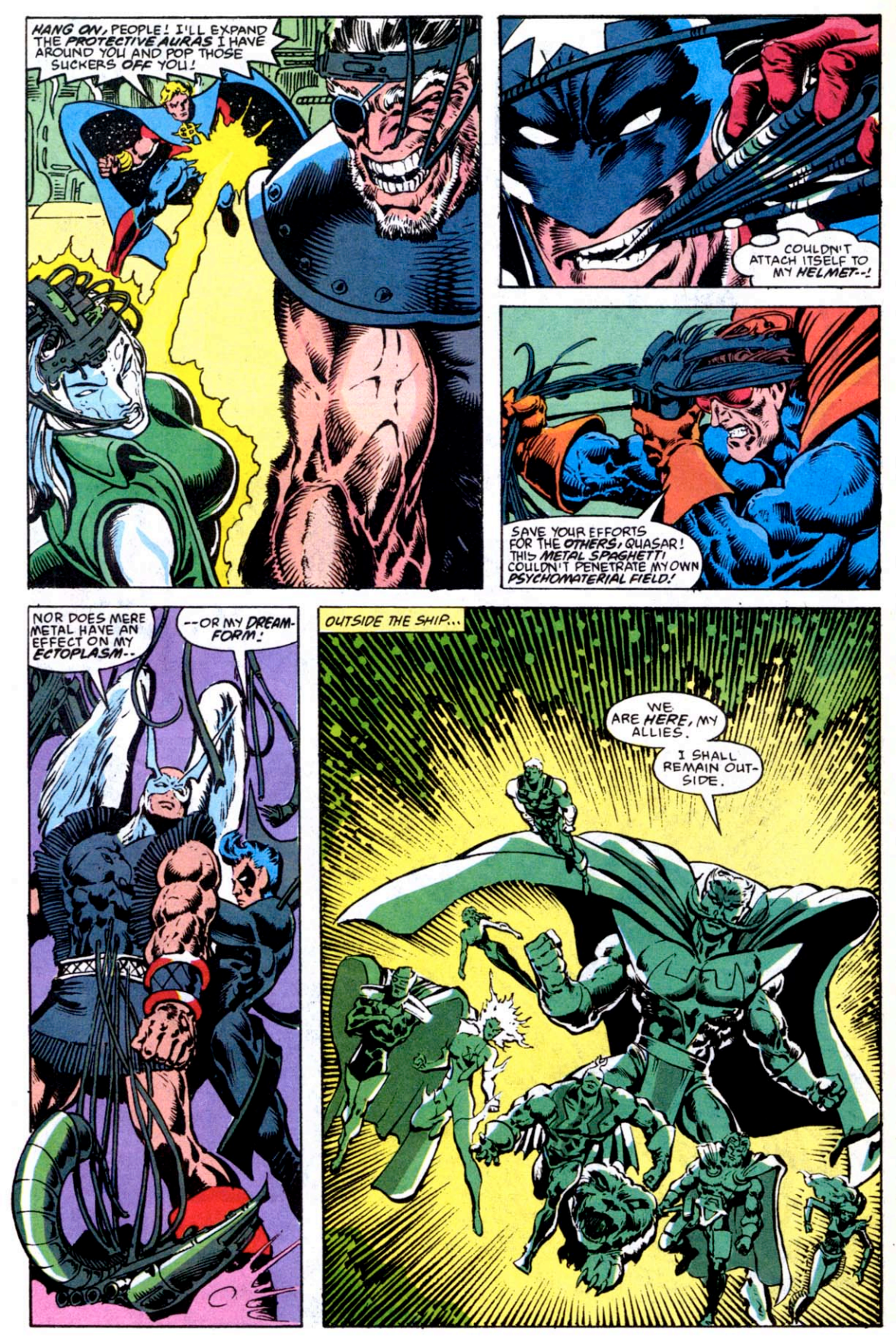
WAY TO **GO,** BLACK BOLT!


THE MUTE INHUMAN GESTURES, TRYING TO DENY CREDIT, BUT BINARY, CAPTAIN MARVEL AND PERUN DO NOT KNOW HIM WELL ENOUGH TO UNDERSTAND HIM.
AND WHILE THE EARTH HEROES DETERMINE THEIR NEXT MOVE, THREE SHI'AR HEROES HAVE ALREADY DETERMINED THEIRS....
<THERE HE IS!>
<HIS BACK IS TO US! WE MAY BE ABLE TO STRIKE BEFORE HE CAN BRING HIS POWERS TO BEAR!>
SOLAR WIND... VOYAGER... MOONDANCER... LATE OF THE IMPERIAL GUARD! WHAT BRINGS YOU TO THE SANCTUM OF THE STRANGER?
<VENGEANCE! FOR TREATING US LIKE LABORATORY SPECIMENS WHEN YOU IMPRISONED US FIVE REVOLUTIONS AGO!>
<FEEL OUR WRATH, FIEND!>
<I THINK NOT.
<I WOULD RATHER YOU WORSHIP ME FOR WHAT I DID.>
<ALL PRAISES TO YOU, MIGHTY STRANGER!!!>
<THAT IS BETTER. NOW COME WITH ME...>
8


AND AN INSTANT LATER...
EARTH BEINGS... I AM THE STRANGER, IN POSSESSION OF THE STARBRAND, I AM STRONGER THAN EVER.
I GO TO ENGAGE SKELETRON, YOU WILL ACCOMPANY ME.
THERE MAY BE CONFLICT. I WANT ALL OF YOU AT THE PEAK OF YOUR ABILITIES.
"IKARIS THE ETERNAL... I MEND YOUR CLEFT FORM!
"BLACK BOLT... I GRANT YOU TEMPORARY CONTROL OVER YOUR VOICE!
"BINARY... I RESTORE YOUR FRAGMENTED PSYCHE.
"CAPTAIN MARVEL... I RETURN TO YOU YOUR TRANSFORMATIVE POWERS.
"PERUN... YOUR ENCHANTED MALLET IS YOURS ONCE MORE!"

THE EDGE OF EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE... WHERE SKELETRON'S SHIP ORBITS...
I DO NOT LIKE THE LOOK OF THOSE PODS THAT HAVE EXTENDED FROM THAT SHIP...
THEY ARE CRACKLING WITH ENERGY... SOME SORT OF DEATH RAY...?
SHOULD I ATTEMPT TO DO SOMETHING ON MY OWN, OR WOULD I JUST SUCCEED IN GETTING MY ECTOPLASMIC BODY OBLITERATED?
WHERE IN THE NAME OF THE WHITE EVENT ARE MY FELLOW PARANORMALS...?
AS IF IN ANSWER...
GREAT SPIRIT?
YOU MUST BE PSI-HAWK! I'M QUASAR.. FROM ANOTHER EARTH, AND I'M HERE TO HELP YOU GUYS REPULSE THESE ALIENS!
HE'S TELLING IT STRAIGHT, PSI-GUY!

LET ME DRILL US AN ENTRANCE INTO THE SHIP, AND THEN--
I AM NOT WAITING, YOU ARE NOT THE ONLY BEING OF POWER AMONG US.
OKAY, PEOPLE-- LET'S GO!
I GAVE EVERYONE WHO NEEDED IT A QUANTUM-AURA AN AIR-SUPPLY. NO TELLING WHAT THE ATMOSPHERE MAY BE LIKE.
HEY, THESE ALIENS ARE HEINOUS ELECTRICIANS! WATCH OUT FOR ALL THE LOOSE WIRES AND CRUD HANGIN' FROM THE CEILING!
MAN, THIS IS NOTHING LIKE STAR TRE-EEEECHH!
METALLURGE, WHAT IS IT?
UURRRRAHHH!
THIS IS YOUR FAULT, QUASAR! YOU LED THEM INTO A TRAP!
WHAT? AW, MAN-- SKULLHUGGERS, LIKE THE ONE'S IN THE MOON-THRUSTER!*
NO, I DIDN'T! COME ON, WE CAN GET THEM FREE!
*SEE STARBLAST #1. --Rock-The-Casbah

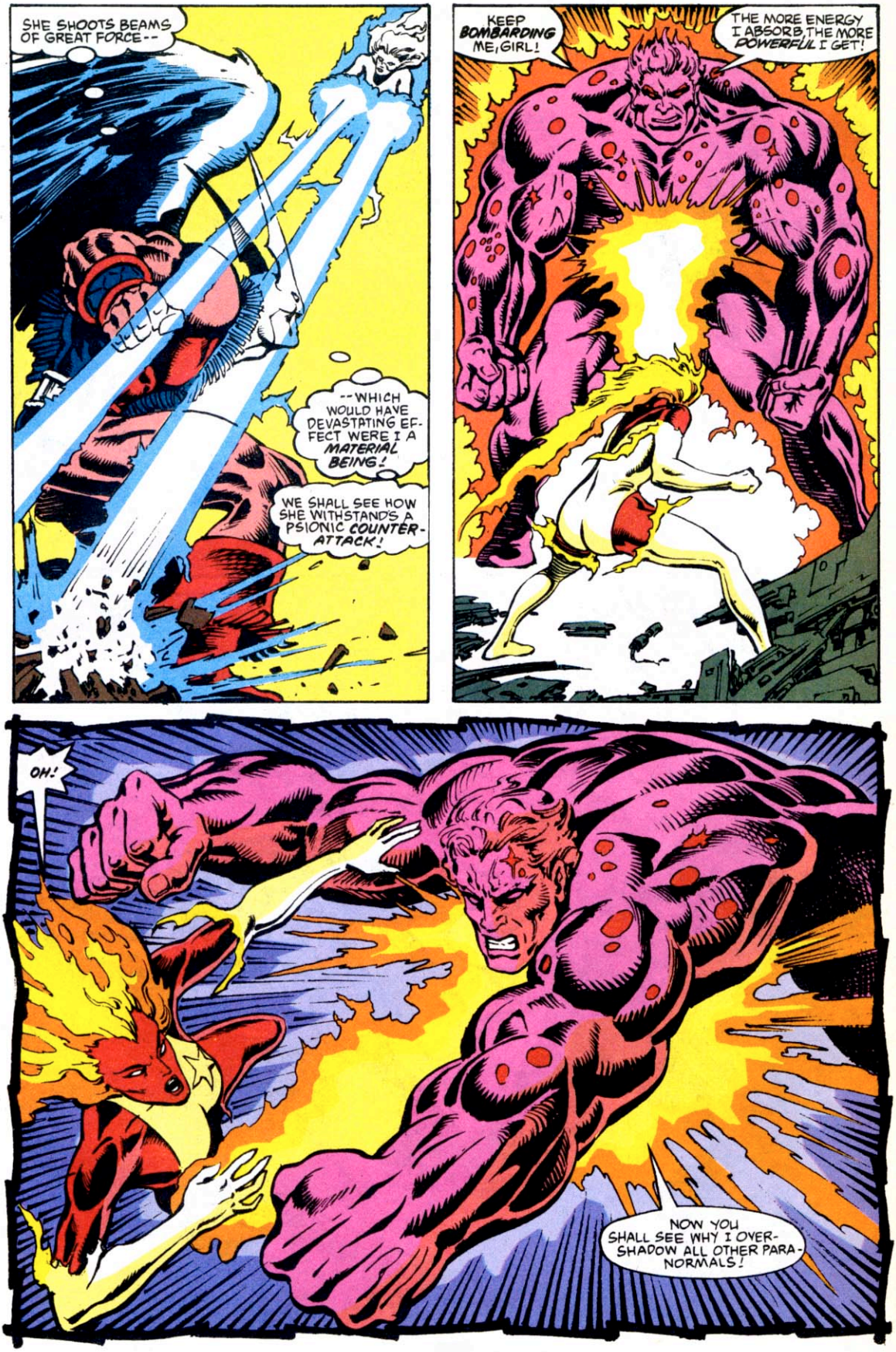

HANG ON, PEOPLE! I'LL EXPAND THE PROTECTIVE AURAS I HAVE AROUND YOU AND POP THOSE SUCKERS OFF YOU!
COULDN'T ATTACH ITSELF TO MY HELMET--!
SAVE YOUR EFFORTS FOR THE OTHERS, QUASAR! THIS METAL SPAGHETTI COULDN'T PENETRATE MY OWN PSYCHOMATERIAL FIELD!
NOR DOES MERE METAL HAVE AN EFFECT ON MY ECTOPLASM--
--OR MY DREAM-FORM!
OUTSIDE THE SHIP...
WE ARE HERE, MY ALLIES.
I SHALL REMAIN OUTSIDE.

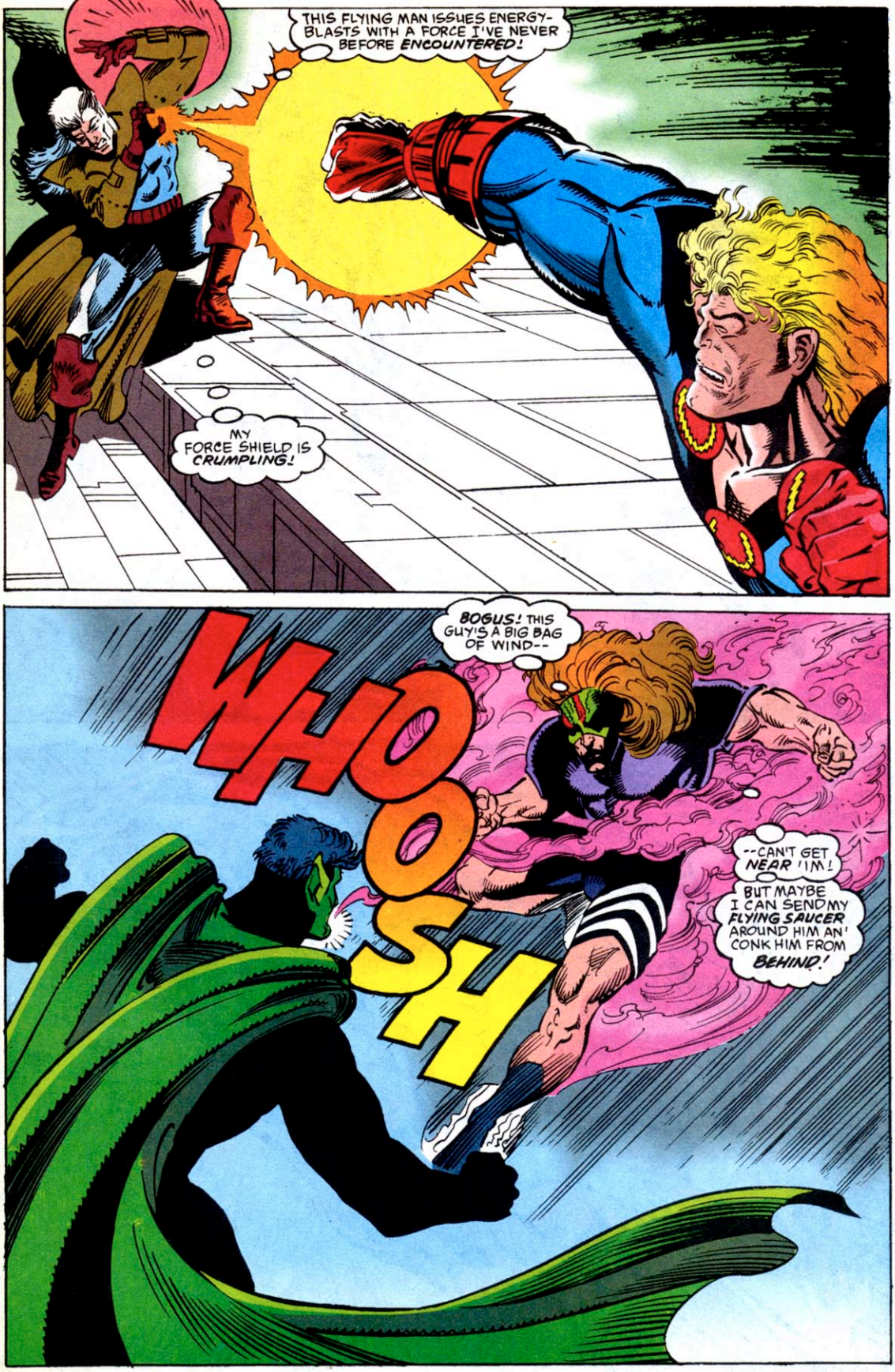
YOU WILL ENTER THE SHIP AND *SUB-DUE* EVERYONE IN-SIDE!

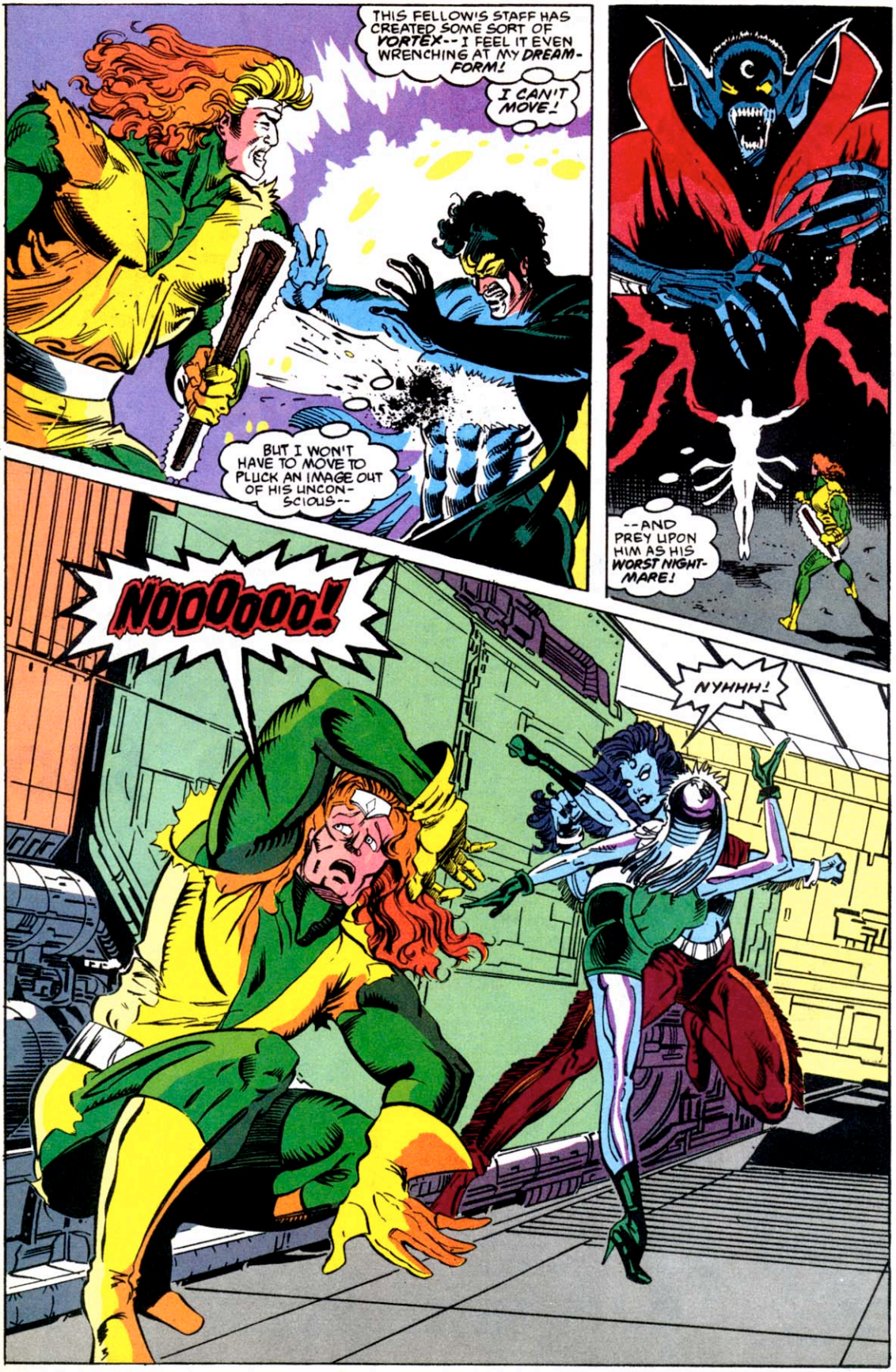
I HOPE YOU DO NOT SEEK TO *DEFY* ME, STRANGER. WE HAD AN *AGREEMENT*, DID WE NOT?

INSIDE...
BINARY!
GREAT! REINFORCEMENTS!
BUT--!
WHOOSH
WHAT--? SOLAR WIND!
THESE ARE THE ALIENS?! THEY LOOK LIKE HU-NNGH!
BDMMP
I DON'T KNOW WHAT THIS FELLOW'S DOING, BUT I PRAY MY FORCE FIELD IS STRONG ENOUGH TO WITHSTAND IT!

GRRRRAAR!
PUM
PUM
PUM
BEHIND ME--A WOMAN!
HER THOUGHTS INDICATE SHE'S HUMAN! WHY THEN DOES SHE ATTACK?


SHE SHOOTS BEAMS OF GREAT FORCE--
--WHICH WOULD HAVE DEVASTATING EFFECT WERE I A MATERIAL BEING!
WE SHALL SEE HOW SHE WITHSTANDS A PSIONIC COUNTER-ATTACK!
KEEP BOMBARDING ME, GIRL!
THE MORE ENERGY I ABSORB, THE MORE POWERFUL I GET!
OH!
NOW YOU SHALL SEE WHY I OVERSHADOW ALL OTHER PARANORMALS!


THIS FLYING MAN ISSUES ENERGY-BLASTS WITH A FORCE I'VE NEVER BEFORE ENCOUNTERED!
MY FORCE SHIELD IS CRUMPLING!
WHOOSH
BOGUS! THIS GUY'S A BIG BAG OF WIND--
--CAN'T GET NEAR 'IM!
BUT MAYBE I CAN SEND MY FLYING SAUCER AROUND HIM AN' CONK HIM FROM BEHIND!


THIS FELLOW'S STAFF HAS CREATED SOME SORT OF VORTEX-- I FEEL IT EVEN WRENCHING AT MY DREAM-FORM!
I CAN'T MOVE!
BUT I WON'T HAVE TO MOVE TO PLUCK AN IMAGE OUT OF HIS UNCON-SCIOUS--
--AND PREY UPON HIM AS HIS WORST NIGHT-MARE!
NOOOOOO!
NYHHH!

OUTSIDE THE STARSHIP...

YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW *DISAPPOINTED* I AM IN YOU, STRANGER. DESPITE OUR *AGREEMENT*, YOU PROCEED TO *OPPRESS* ME, AND HERE I DEEMED YOU A BEING OF HONOR.

YOUR *VALUE JUDGMENTS* ARE OF LESS INTEREST TO ME THAN YOU COULD IMAGINE, MACHINE.

YOU SAY THE WORD "MACHINE" AS IF IT WERE SOMETHING *INFERIOR*, BUT IN POINT OF FACT, WE ARE FAR SUPERIOR TO YOU PITIFUL ORGANICS!

YOU THINK YOU CAN DESTROY MY *ENERGY-SIPHONS*? YOU ARE IN *ERROR*. WE TECH-ENITES ARE COMPRISED OF SELF-REPLI-CATING *ADAPTIVE MICROCIRCUITRY*..

--CAPABLE OF INSTANTANEOUS *TRANSMUTATION* AND *RECON-FIGURATION*. AND NOW I HAVE *ATTUNED MYSELF* TO STARBRAND ENERGY.

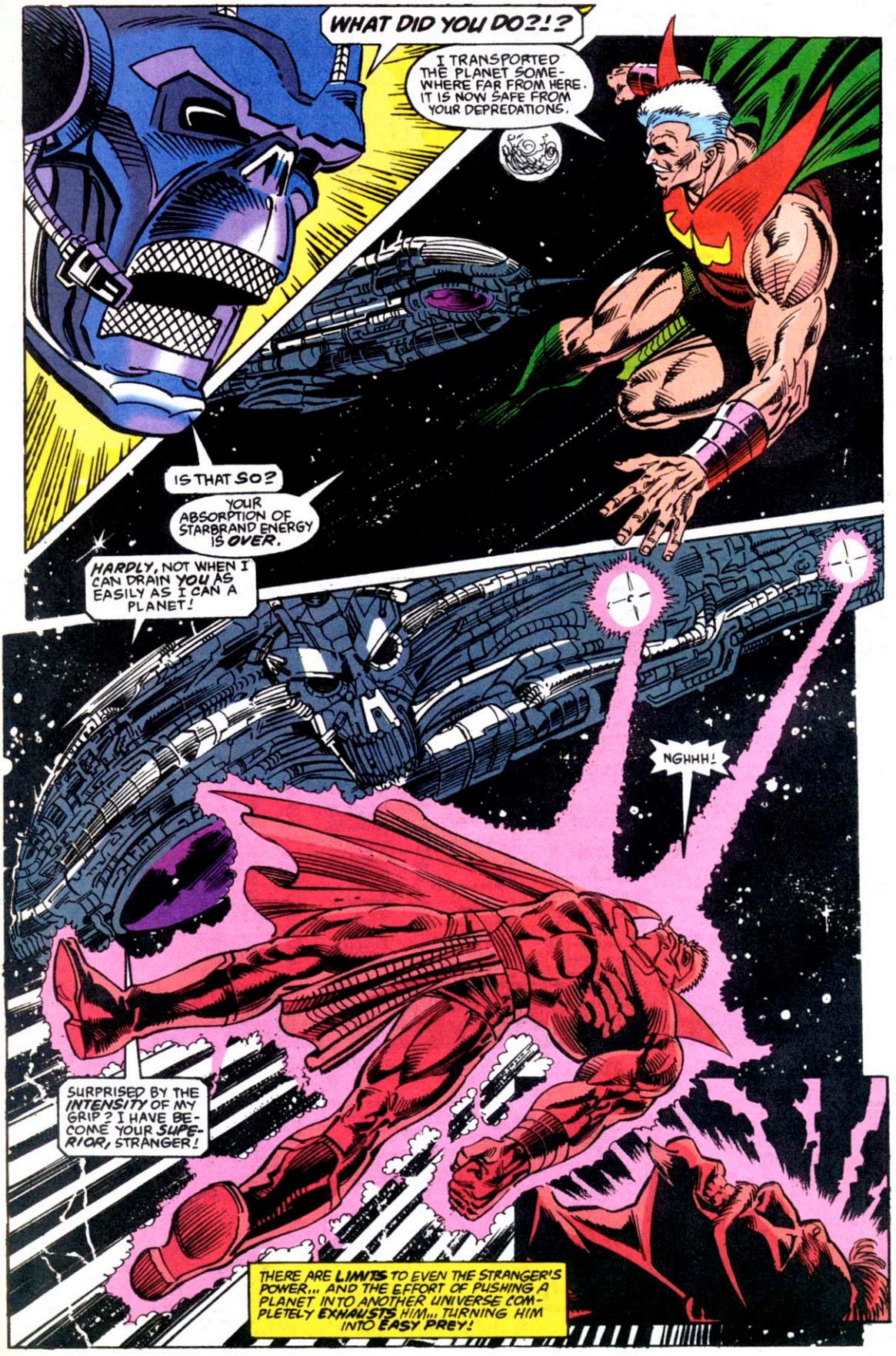
BLAST ME ALL YOU WISH! IT WILL ONLY CHARGE MY POWER CELLS FASTER AND MAKE ME ALL THE *STRONGER*.

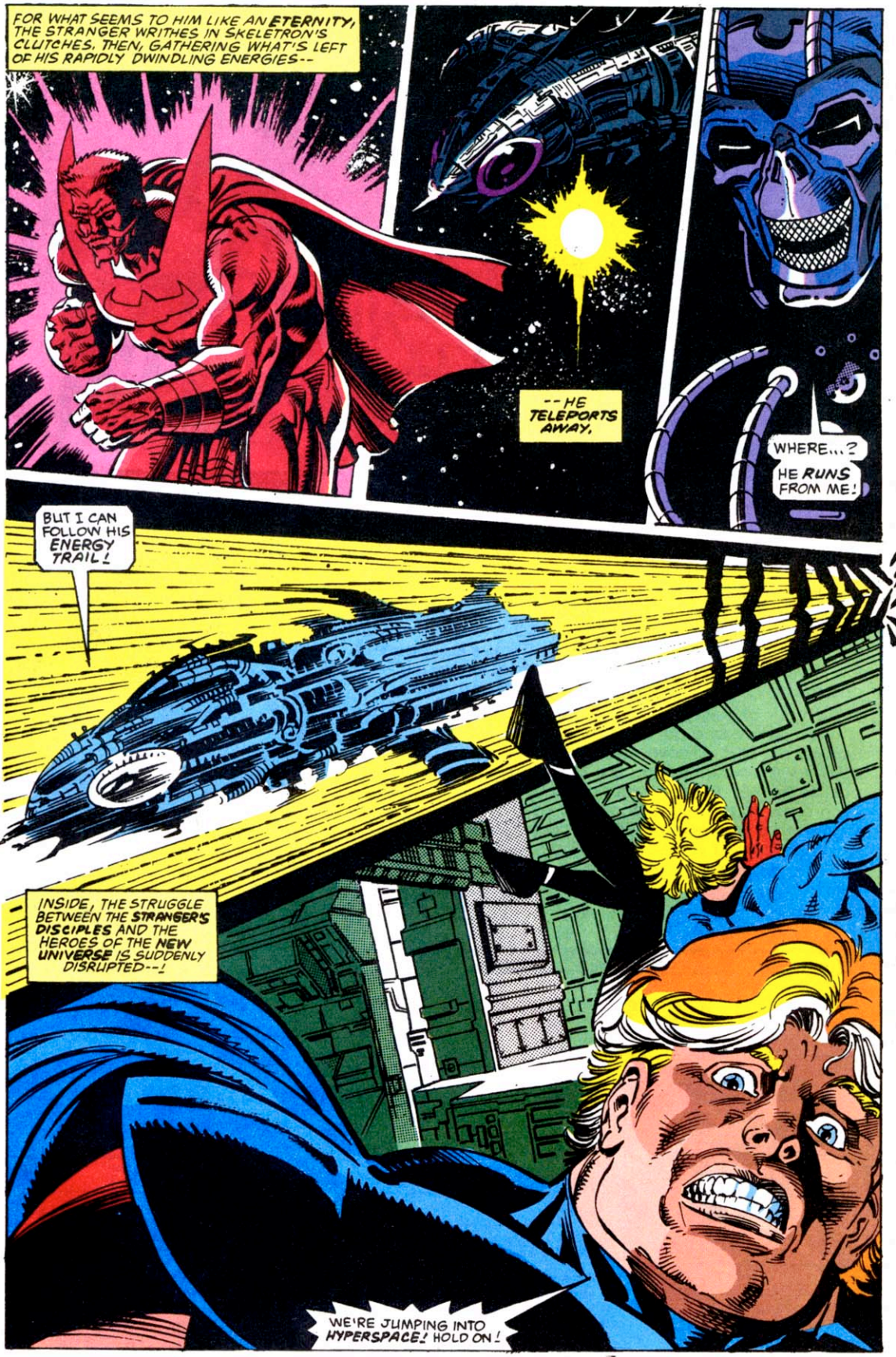
HAVE YOU NOT YET *GUESSED*? THIS ENTIRE SHIP IS MY TRUE BODY. THE HUMANOID FIGURE YOU THOUGHT ME TO BE IS MERELY AN *APPENDAGE*.

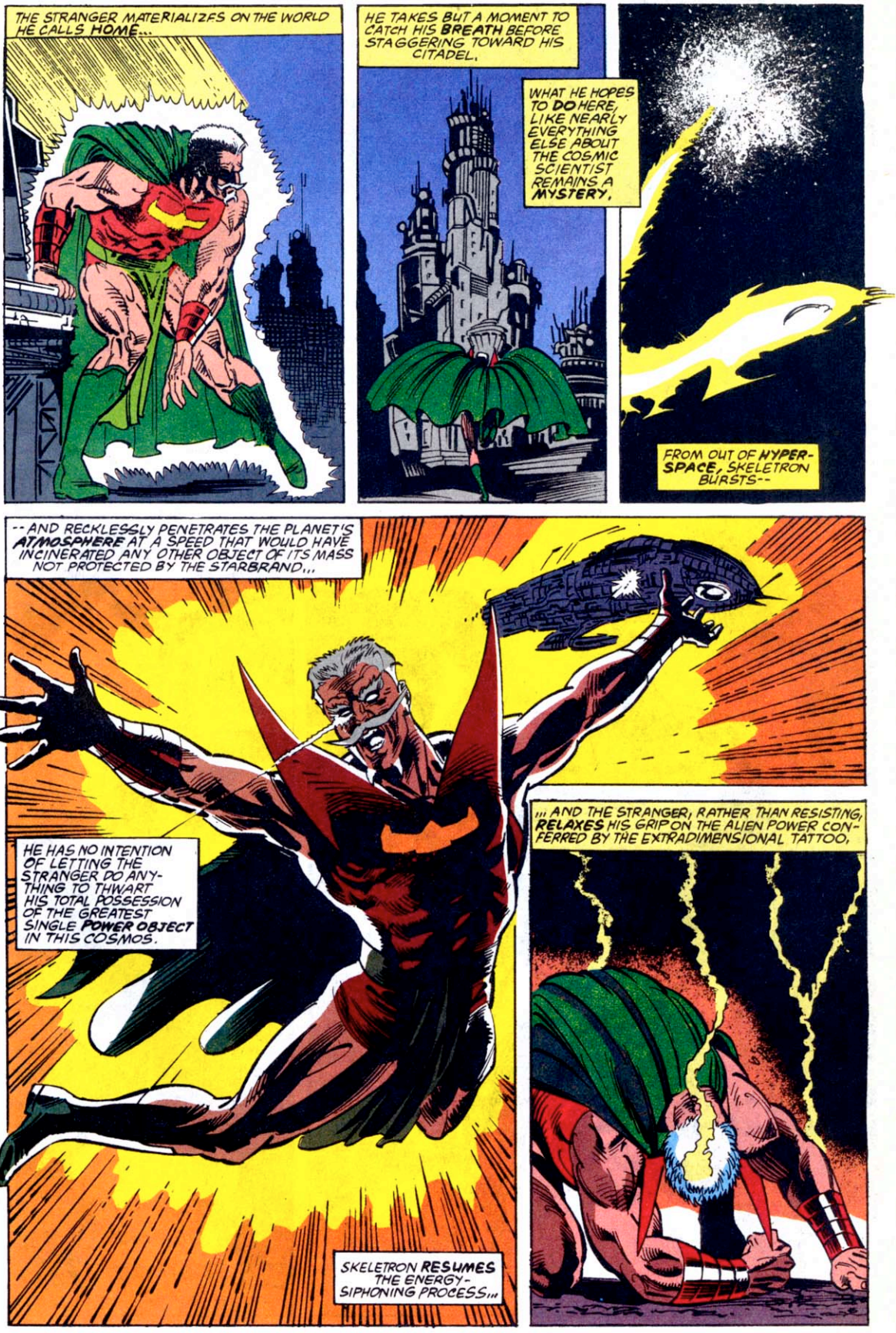
WATCH ME NOW, ORGANIC! WATCH AS I *DRAIN* THAT WORLD BELOW OF ALL OF ITS *STARBRAND ENERGY* AND THERE IS NOTHING *YOU* AND YOUR *PALTRY SLIVER* OF THE STARBRAND CAN DO ABOUT IT.

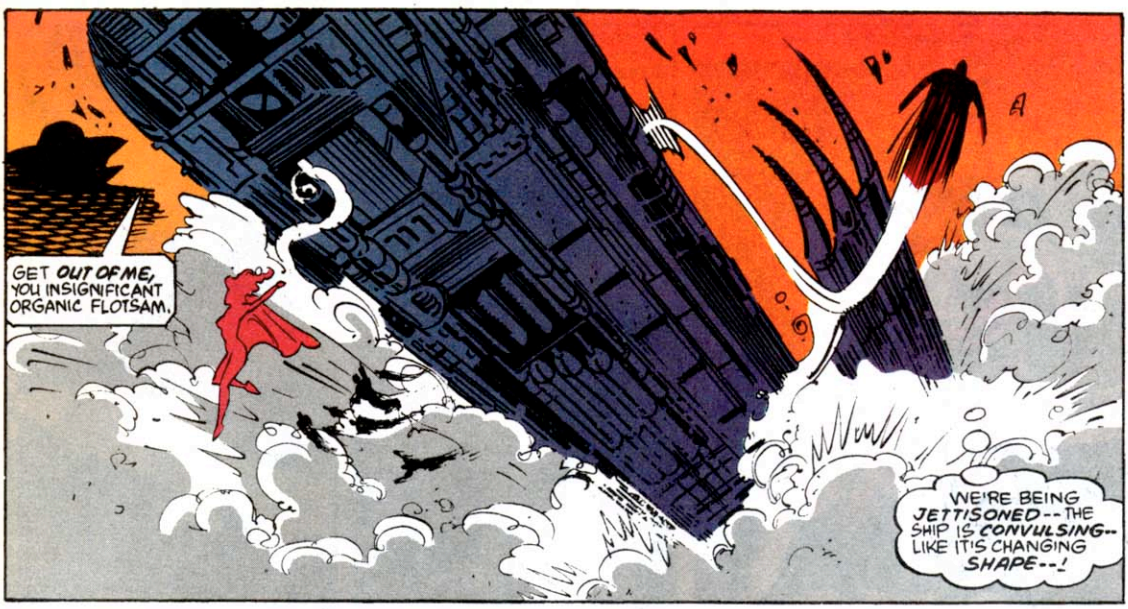
WHAT *HAPPENS*, THEN, MACHINE--IF THE SOURCE OF YOUR NEW-FOUND POWER--

--WERE TO SUDDENLY *DIS-APPEAR*?


WHAT DID YOU DO?!?
I TRANSPORTED THE PLANET SOMEWHERE FAR FROM HERE. IT IS NOW SAFE FROM YOUR DEPREDATIONS.
IS THAT SO?
YOUR ABSORPTION OF STARBRAND ENERGY IS OVER.
HARDLY, NOT WHEN I CAN DRAIN YOU AS EASILY AS I CAN A PLANET!
NGHHH!
SURPRISED BY THE INTENSITY OF MY GRIP? I HAVE BECOME YOUR SUPERIOR, STRANGER!
THERE ARE LIMITS TO EVEN THE STRANGER'S POWER... AND THE EFFORT OF PUSHING A PLANET INTO ANOTHER UNIVERSE COMPLETELY EXHAUSTS HIM... TURNING HIM INTO EASY PREY!


FOR WHAT SEEMS TO HIM LIKE AN ETERNITY, THE STRANGER WRITHES IN SKELETRON'S CLUTCHES, THEN, GATHERING WHAT'S LEFT OF HIS RAPIDLY DWINDLING ENERGIES--
--HE TELEPORTS AWAY.
WHERE...? HE RUNS FROM ME!
BUT I CAN FOLLOW HIS ENERGY TRAIL!
INSIDE, THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE STRANGER'S DISCIPLES AND THE HEROES OF THE NEW UNIVERSE IS SUDDENLY DISRUPTED--!
WE'RE JUMPING INTO HYPERSPACE! HOLD ON!


THE STRANGER MATERIALIZES ON THE WORLD HE CALLS HOME...
HE TAKES BUT A MOMENT TO CATCH HIS BREATH BEFORE STAGGERING TOWARD HIS CITADEL.
WHAT HE HOPES TO DO HERE, LIKE NEARLY EVERYTHING ELSE ABOUT THE COSMIC SCIENTIST REMAINS A MYSTERY.
FROM OUT OF HYPER-SPACE, SKELETRON BURSTS--
--AND RECKLESSLY PENETRATES THE PLANET'S ATMOSPHERE AT A SPEED THAT WOULD HAVE INCINERATED ANY OTHER OBJECT OF ITS MASS NOT PROTECTED BY THE STARBRAND...
HE HAS NO INTENTION OF LETTING THE STRANGER DO ANY-THING TO THWART HIS TOTAL POSSESSION OF THE GREATEST SINGLE POWER OBJECT IN THIS COSMOS.
SKELETRON RESUMES THE ENERGY-SIPHONING PROCESS...
...AND THE STRANGER, RATHER THAN RESISTING, RELAXES HIS GRIP ON THE ALIEN POWER CON-FERRED BY THE EXTRADIMENSIONAL TATTOO,


GET OUT OF ME, YOU INSIGNIFICANT ORGANIC FLOTSAM.
WE'RE BEING JETTISONED--THE SHIP IS CONVULSING--LIKE IT'S CHANGING SHAPE--!

THE METAL OF THE STARSHIP BULGES, BUCKLES, BENDS AND EXTENDS, SLOWLY METAMORPHOSING INTO A TWO-THOUSAND-FOOT HUMANOID BEARING THE IMAGE OF SKELETRON!
STRANGER, YOUR END IS AT HAND.
I AM INSTANTS AWAY FROM WRESTING THE FINAL SLIVER OF THE STARBRAND ENERGY FROM YOUR FRAIL FORM, STRANGER--
--AND WHEN I DO, YOU SHALL PAY FOR YOUR DUPLICITY WITH YOUR LIFE!

DO NOT FEEL TOO BADLY FOR YOURSELF, HOWEVER--THE REST OF YOUR ORGANIC ILK SHALL SOON--
--WHAT IS THIS?
WHAT HAPPENED TO THE PLANET I WAS STANDING ON?
STRANGER?
STRANGER?
STRANGER?
WHERE ARE YOU? WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

ON THE STRANGER'S WORLD, ALL IS CALM.
SO WHAT HAPPENED TO SKELETRON? WHY DID HE BLINK OUT OF THE SKY?
WAIT HERE. I'LL GO ASK THE STRANGER.
SEEING THAT THE BEINGS SKELETRON DISGORGED WERE NOT HIS STAR-BLASTERS, THE STRANGER RELEASES HIS ALLIES FROM THEIR COMMAND TO COMBAT THEM.
HEY! WHAT HAPPENED? HOW DID YOU GET RID OF SKELETRON?
HE DID IT TO HIMSELF. MY WORLD'S SLIDE INTO THE UNIVERSE OF THE STARBRAND WAS PRECIPITATED BY THE ANOMALY OF TRYING TO CONTAIN TWO GREAT STORES OF ENERGY FROM TWO INCOMPATIBLE UNIVERSES IN ONE BODY.
AS SKELETRON DRAINED ME OF STARBRAND ENERGY, I BECAME LESS AND LESS OF AN ANOMALY, AND MY PLANET BEGAN RETRACTING BACK INTO ITS RIGHTFUL UNIVERSE.
SO WHEN I SURRENDERED THE LAST IOTA OF STARBRAND ENERGY TO HIM, THE APERTURE BETWEEN DIMENSIONS CLOSED, WITH HIM ON ONE SIDE, ME ON THE OTHER.
THE UNIVERSE IS RID OF SKELETRON.
WHAT ABOUT THE PLANET THE STARBRAND CAME FROM? MY GIRLFRIEND'S STILL ON IT!
I HAVE BROUGHT IT TO THIS COSMOS AND PLACED IT IN ORBIT AROUND MY WORLD.
SKELETRON AND I HAVE TRADED PRIZES. HE HAS THE GREATEST POWER IN A UNIVERSE DEVOID OF ALL LIFE SAVE HIMSELF--
--WHILE I HAVE A WORLD TEEMING WITH PARANORMAL BEINGS.
WHO WOULD YOU SAY GOT THE BETTER BARGAIN?
THE END